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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes findings and implications of a research project to explore ways educational institutions influence career development in women undergraduates. A three-page narrative first briefly describes collection of data between 1973 and 1975 from more than 1000 male and female freshmen and seniors at six coeducational New England colleges and universities. These findings are summarized: career development in college women may be affected by school characteristics; there are sex differences in the way certain college campus characteristics are perceived; there are significant relationships between how women students perceive their institutions and what they do there; important pre-college predictors of women's later career choices include type of high school attended and supportiveness of high school environment; and women students' career development appears importantly related to how encouraging they find their college environment to be. Six policy implications are also presented which are based on findings and input from participants at the Career Development for Undergraduate Women Conference, where the findings were presented and discussed. Thirteeen statistical tables with data from the project are then provided. Conference materials and materials for six workshops held conclude the report. (YLB)

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Expanding Career Awareness and Options among Women Undergraduates in Coeducational Institutions: Recommendations for Educational Policy Makers

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A Summary of Research

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Expanding Career Awareness and Options among Women Undergraduates in Coeducational Institutions: Recommendations for Educational Policy Makers

The Henry A. Murray Research Center of Radcliffe College has recently completed a project, funded by the Women's Educational Equity Act, exploring some of the ways educational institutions influence career development in women undergraduates. While a great deal of research in this area has concentrated on characteristics of the individual (i.e., sex-role attitude, mother's occupation, etc.) our focus was on aspects of college experience and the college environment which affect women students' career aspirations and goals. This report summarizes our findings and what we believe to be the most important implications of the research for educational administrators and policy makers.

The data for the project were collected between 1973 and 1975 from more than 1000 male and female college students enrolled at six coeducational New England colleges and universities. Information obtained from questionnaires sent to freshmen and seniors included attitudes toward satisfaction with the college, sex-role attitudes, career goals and aspirations, and personal background characteristics. Data were also obtained from 80 participants in a career internship for women conducted at the same six institutions. In addition, objective data were collected from each of the institutions regarding male/female ratios at various levels within the institution, availability and number of facilities for women (i.e., health services, athletic offerings, campus organizations such as women's centers), and a number of other aspects of the college environment.

In our analyses we looked at the relationship between institutional characteristics (i.e., percentage of female undergraduates, percentage of female faculty, percentage of female advisors and counselors, percentage of women in administration, number of special facilities for women); college experience (i.e., participation in extracurricular activities, perception of discrimination towards women students, male/female ratio in classes enrolled in, etc.); and background (religion, social class, type of high school, career goals in high school, etc.) on career development. The aspects of career development we were concerned with included interest in a male-dominated career area (since women tend to restrict the range of career options they consider and eventually choose only from a few traditional areas), aspiration level, and specificity of career plans. While we considered differences in the way the campuses were perceived and used by male and female students, our primary focus was on the female seniors.

Findings. Following is a summary of our findings, with regard to female undergraduates' career development. Unless noted otherwise, it may be assumed that the relationships we found were either non-existent for the male students, or in the same direction as for the female students.

1. When we controlled for the effects of rank and size (which are, after all, not easily subject to change) we found that career development in college women may indeed be affected by characteristics of the schools they attend. Choice of a male-dominated

career area, for example, was found to be related to high percentages of women administrators. Percentage of women administrators and number of facilities for women are positively related to aspiration level; percentage of female clerical workers and percentage of female advisors and counselors were negatively related to aspiration level.

2. There are sex differences in the way certain college campus characteristics are perceived. Women undergraduates believe there are proportionally fewer women in administration and more at clerical levels than do male students. At some campuses women students underestimate the actual proportion of women faculty and administrators.
3. There are significant relationships between how women students perceive their institutions and what they do there. For example, the more likely women students were to believe the president or chancellor of their college to be less interested in career development for women students than for men, the less likely they were to participate in extra-curricular activities or run for office.
4. Important precollege predictors of women's later career choices include type of high school attended, supportiveness of high school environment, and career choice while in high school.
5. Women students' career development appears to be importantly related as well to how encouraging they find their college environment to be. Also significant was participation in job-related activities, whether through special career development programs, on-campus jobs, or volunteer services (i.e., tutoring, hospital work, caring for the elderly, etc.).

Policy implications. The findings of this project were presented and discussed at a working conference held at the Murray Center and attended by sixty administrators, faculty members, and career counselors from the six institutions, involved in the study. The policy implications presented below are based on the findings and input from Conference participants and Center staff. While we do not claim that our analyses necessarily demonstrate causal links between institutional characteristics and career development, we do feel that the results suggest a number of important directions for policy makers concerned with promoting career development among women undergraduates.

1. Career aspirations among women undergraduates may not be affected so much by the number of available female role models on campus as by the power those models are perceived as having. The fact that aspiration level and non-traditionality of career choice are positively related to the percentage of women administrators on campus, and negatively related to the percentage of women in clerical positions, suggests that students may be motivated as much by a desire to avoid the fate of the powerless as by a desire to emulate a high status role model. The reason that the percentage of faculty women does not appear to be influential in our results may

reflect an accurate perception that women faculty are not given an equitable share of power and influence within the instituion. Thus it would seem important to increase the visibility and influence of women faculty and administrators on campus.

2. Women students who feel the institution is discriminatory against women are definitely more constricted in their activities on campus and the career options they are willing to consider. Public statements, speeches, and releases by any representative of the institution, particularly the highest officials, should be carefully reviewed for statements which suggest overtly or by omission that the institution is less concerned with its female students than its male students. Furthermore, male faculty should be encouraged to participate in workshops sponsored and sanctioned by the institution which examine the ways in which male faculty, particularly at coeducational institutions, may or may not be helpful in the advice and encouragement they give to their female students regarding their career options.

3. Since having an environment which is perceived by women students as "encouraging" is also important, thought should be given not only to eliminating discriminatory aspects, but also to fostering explicit environmental messages about women students' academic and career development. Some possible ways this could be done is by offering women's studies courses, sex-role socialization courses for all students, conferences on career development, increased funding of intern programs, athletic scholarships for women, etc.

4. Workshops should be held for career counselors to explore both how best to provide career counseling for more students, and how to avoid giving mixed messages to female students about having high aspirations and pursuing a career in an area traditionally dominated by men (women counselors in particular may overstress the difficulties, thus discouraging women students from considering careers other than those traditionally associated with women).

5. Work experience appears to have an important impact on women students' career development. Opportunities for such experience should proabably be provided in a variety of forms, such as intern programs, research assistantships for undergraduates, etc.

6. Efforts at expanding women's career awareness should take place on a variety of levels (i.e., all-campus conferences, special courses, department seminars, in the classroom, women's centers, etc.).

Overall, then, what seems to be important for policy makers to keep in mind is that relatively broad institutional decisions do have an effect on the self-images and plans women students' develop with regard to their futures. Providing an atmosphere where women students will be encouraged to pursue a wider range of career options and higher level positions within those careers is not accomplished merely by providing equal numbers of facilities, female faculty, etc. It is rather a matter of making sure that women at all levels have an equal share in the institution's decision-making processes, and that the institution is as actively and visibly responsive to women students' needs as it is to those of the men.

Expanding Career Awareness and Options among Women Undergraduates in Coeducational Institutions

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Statistical Tables

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Table 1

Institutional Characteristics

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	School 6
Size	Medium	Small	Small	Medium	Large	Medium
Curriculum	Traditional Liberal Arts	Traditional Liberal Arts	Experimental Liberal Arts	Technical	Traditional Liberal Arts	Traditional Liberal Arts
Religion of Students (50%+)	Catholic	Jewish	Protestant	Mixed	Catholic	Catholic
Rank[a]	Very Selective	Very Selective	Selective	Very Selective	Selective	Less Selective
% Female Undergraduates	44%	48%	49%	13%	40%	47%
% Female Faculty	26%	22%	39%	9%	[illegible]	33%
% Female Central Administration (Director & Staff)	38%	29%	20%	47%	13%	20%
% Female Non-Faculty Advisors, Counselors	26%	37%	34%	19%	10%	13%
Total Special Facilities for Women[b]	3	3	1	5	6	2
Difference Between Number of Male & Female Sports Offered[c]	3	3	0	9	3	0

[a]Based on Hawke's Comprehensive Guide to Colleges (1978).

[b]Based on number present of following: daycare, gyn care, maternity benefits, women's center, continuing education program, sex education program.

[c]Based on number of male sports - number of female sports.

Table 2

Coding for Male-Dominated Occupations
(Based on U.S. Census, 1970)

Code	Occupation	% Females
7 (90%-100% males)	Architect	3.5
	Dentist	3.4
	Professor of Physics	6.7
6 (80%-89% males)	Business (financial management)	17.6
	Math Professor	19
	Urban Planner	12.1
5 (60%-79% males)	Biologist	34.9
	Sociologist	35.4
	College Administrator	23.4
4 (40%-59% males)	Secondary Teacher	49.1
	Health Administrator	44.6
	Guidance Counselor	43.6
3 (20%-39% males)	Social Worker	62.7
	Therapist	63.3
	Health Technician	69. 6
2 (10%-19% males)	Dancer	82
	Librarian	81.9
	Elementary Teacher	83.7
1 (0-9% males)	Flight Attendant	95.8
	Dietician	92
	Nurse	97.3

Table 3

Coding for Male-Dominated Majors
(Based on BA's Awarded in 1971*)

Code	Major	% Female
5 (80%-100% males)	Engineering	0.05
	Physics	6
	Architecture	7
4 (60%-80% males)	Religion	22
	Biology	29
	History	36
3 (40%-60% males)	Music	53
	Anthropology	55
	Sociology	55
2 (20%-40% males)	Art	67
	English	68
	Occupational Therapy	75
1 (0%-20% males)	Education	85
	Nursing	97
	Nutrition	100

*Bayer, Alan; Royer, Jeannie; and Webb, Richard, "Four years after college entry," Ace research reports, vol. 8, no. 1, March, 1973.

Table 4

Coding for Aspiration Level and Specificity

Aspiration Level		Specificity	
Code	Example	Code	Example
3 = high	college professor, business executive	4 = very specific	pediatrician, legal secretary
2 = middl	nurse, probation officer	3 = specific	doctor, secretary
1 = low	factory worker	2 = vague	health worker, retailing
		1 = no idea	"who knows," "something fun"

Table 5

Average Scores on Career and Major Choice Variables for Freshmen by Sex

School:	Choice of Male Dominated Career Area		Aspiration Level		Specificity of Career Plans		Choice of Male Dominated Major	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
1	6.11*	3.93*	2.40	2.30	2.71	2.64	4.13*	2.23*
2	6.20	5.86	2.68	2.57	2.40*	1.86*	3.69	3.40
3	6.00	4.33	2.50	2.28	2.00	1.69	3.25	3.38
4	6.51	6.37	2.49	2.47	2.36	2.40	4.64*	4.16*
5	5.84*	4.46*	2.27	2.23	2.31	2.39	4.20*	3.15*
6	5.20	4.44	2.50	2.33	2.12	2.47	3.68*	2.81*
Average for Total Sample by Sex	6.09[a]*	4.80[a]*	2.44*	2.33*	2.38	2.36[a]	4.16[a]*	3.14[a]*

* = significant difference between the sexes for this comparison

a = significant differences among the schools for this sex on this variable

Table 6

Average Scores on Career and Major Choice Variables for Seniors by Sex

School:	Choice of Male Dominated Career Area		Aspiration Level		Specificity of Career Plans		Choice of Male Dominated Major	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
1	5.35*	4.13*	2.47	2.33	2.83	2.61	3.93*	2.39*
2	6.33	5.00	2.56	3.00	2.46	2.50	3.64*	2.80*
3	5.50	4.57	2.00	2.17	2.40	2.00	2.33	3.00
4	6.52	6.27	2.42	2.40	2.86	2.63	4.60	4.25
5	5.41*	3.71*	2.27*	2.10*	2.70	2.56	3.61*	2.60*
6	6.20*	4.78*	2.20	2.60	2.29	2.82	3.33	2.91
Average for Total Sample by Sex	5.78[a]*	4.45[a]*	2.35	2.26	2.69	2.56[a]	3.80[a]*	2.91[a]*

* = significant difference between the sexes for this comparison

a = significant differences among the schools for this sex on this variable

Table 7

Institutional Correlates of Career and Major Choice for Seniors

Controlling for Size and Rank

Institutional characteristic	Choice of male-dominated career area		Aspiration level		Specificity of career plans		Major	
	males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females
Percentage of women in central administration and student services		+		+			+	+
Percentage of female faculty	–	–					–	–
Percentage of female undergraduates	–	–					–	–
Percentage of female clerical staff	–	–		–			–	–
Percentage of female counselors & advisors	–	–		–			–	–
Number of separate facilities/benefits for women	+	+		+				+
More sports offered for men than women	–	–					–	–

+ = significant positive correlation
- = significant negative correlation
blank = no significant relationship

Table 8

Institutional Correlates of Career and Major Choice for Freshman
Controlling for Size and Rank

Institutional characteristics	Choice of male-dominated career area		Aspiration level		Specificity of career plans		Major	
	males	females	males	females	males	females	males	females
Percentage of women in central administration and student services						+		+
Percentage of female faculty		–					–	–
Percentage of female undergraduates		–					–	–
Percentage of female clerical staff		–					–	–
[illegible]age of female [illegible]elors & advisors		–					–	–
Number of separate facilities/benefits for women		+						+
More sports offered for men than women		–					–	–

+ = significant position correlation
- = significant negative correlation
blank = no significant relationship

Table 9

Number of

Use and Perception

Sex Differences by School

	Perception			Use		
	Number of Significant Differences	Percentage	Z-Value	Number of Significant Differences	Percentage	Z-Value
School 1	9	22%	4.98*	11	12%	3.06*
School 2	4	10%	1.4	5	5%	.19
School 3	0	0%	-1.4	2	2%	-1.2
School 4	12	29%	7.13*	12	13%	3.54*
School 5	13	32%	7.85*	16	17%	5.45*
School 6	5	12%	2.11*	14	15%	4.5*

43 out of 246 = 17%

Z-value = 8.99*

Total Perceptions = 41

60 out of 552 = 11%

Z-value = 6.38*

Total Uses = 92

* Number of significant differences is significant at .05 level

This Z is derived by comparing the number of significant results obtained with the number expected given the null hypothesis. The Z is used to test this binomial process.

$$Z = \frac{\text{Obtained} - \text{Expected}}{\sqrt{\frac{P \times (1-P)}{N}}}$$

Table 10

Sex Differences Appearing in at Least Three Schools

Female Students More Likely than Male Students to Perceive:	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	School 6
Female Teachers Easier to Approach than Male Teachers	X			X	X	X
Smaller Proportion of Female to Male Administrators on Campus	X	X		X	X	X
Smaller Proportion of Female to Male Faculty on Campus		X		X	X	
Higher Proportion of Female to Male Janitors/Housekeepers on Campus	X	X		X		X

Table 11

Accuracy of Perception

By Sex

	School 1		School 2		School 3		School 4		School 5		School 6	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Percentage of Female Administrators	-						-		-	+	-	
Percentage of Female Faculty							-	+	-	+		
Percentage of Female Students							-					
Percentage of Female Clerical Workers										-		
Percentage of Female Student Service Workers												

- = significantly underestimated

+ = significantly overestimated

Table 12

Comparison of Intern Groups with Female Seniors in General Sample on Career and Major Choice Variables

	Female Seniors in General Sample	Interns	Unsuccessful Applicants Who Did Similar Work	Unsuccessful Applicants Who Did Not Do Similar Work
Choice of Male-Dominated Career Area	4.45*	5.60	5.54	5.42
Aspiration Level	2.26	2.30	2.44	2.35
Specificity of Career Plans	2.56	2.87	2.77	2.72
Major	2.91*	3.20	3.44	3.38

* this mean is significantly different from all others for this variable

Table 13

Background and College Experience Predictors of Senior Women's Career Choices*

Background Variables:	Choice of Male Dominated Career Area[a]	Aspiration Level[b]	Specificity of Career Plans[c]
Socio-economic background of respondent			
Protestant background			
Jewish background			
Catholic background			
Supportiveness of high school environment		+[d]	
Career choice in high school	++	++	
Attended private high school		+	
A major reason for going to college relates to future needs (job, money)	+[d]		
A major reason for going to college relates to interest in its sports offerings	++		
A major reason for going to college relates to interest in its academic program and faculty			

* The relationships presented here are based on multiple regression analysis. The plus signs indicate a positive relationship between variables.

[a] Overall F-ratio = 2.20, df = 23, 106; $p < .01$

[b] Overall F-ratio = 1.58, df = 23, 106; $p < .10$

[c] Overall F-ratio < 1, ns

++ $p \leq .01$

+ $p \leq .05$

+[d] $p < .10$

Background and College Experiences Predictors

of Senior Women's Career Choices*

College Experience:	Choice of Male Dominated Career Area[a]	Aspiration Level[b]	Specificity of Career Plans[c]
Participation in non-academic cultural activities (theatre, dance, etc.)			
Participation in non-academic service and volunteer activities		+	
Participation in political activities			
Participation in athletics	+[d]		
Perception of discrimination against women in subject's classes			
Perception of college environment as hostile to women			
Discussion of career plans with peers			
Discussion of career plans with same-sex faculty member			
Discussion of career plans with career counselors			
Encouraged in college to pursue professional level career			
Supportiveness of college environment			
Male-female ratio of students in subject's classes (1=more women; 3=more men)	+		

* The relationships presented here are based on multiple regression analysis. The plus signs indicate a positive relationship between variables.

[a] Overall F-ratio = 2.20, df = 23, 106; $p < .01$

[b] Overall F-ratio = 1.58, df = 23, 106; $p < .10$

[c] Overall F-ratio < 1, ns

++ $p \leq .01$

+ $p \leq .05$

+[d] $p < .10$

Career Development for Undergraduate Women
Conference Evaluation

Please help us to evaluate our Conference by completing the following:

Status (check one): Faculty _____
Administrator _____
Career Counselor _____
Student _____
Other (specify) _____

Male _____ Female _____

Did you attend the morning session? _____yes _____no

Did you attend the afternoon workshop? _____yes _____no
If yes, which one? _____

What aspects of the Conference did you find the most valuable?

What aspects of the Conference did you find the least valuable?

In what ways could the Conference have been improved?

Career Development for Undergraduate Women Conference

Henry A. Murray Research Center

Cronkhite Center

May 23, 1980

Schedule of Activities

9-10 a.m. Coffee and Pastries (Lobby)

10-12 p.m. Presentation of Research Findings (Living Room)

Presentors: Abigail J. Stewart (Overview of Project)

Susan Gostylo (Sex Differences in the Perception and Use of Campus Resources)

Nia L. Chester (Institutional and Programmatic Effects on Women Students' Career Choices)

Gerard Smits (Measuring the Effects of Personal Background and College Experience on Career Choices)

12-1:30 p.m. Lunch (Lobby)

1:30-3 p.m. Workshops

1. The Roles of Faculty (Leader: Sharlene Hesse-Biber, Boston College)

   Place: Living Room

2. Administrative Decision-Making (Leader: Brinton Lykes, Boston College and Murray Research Center)

   Place: Living Room

3. Career Counseling (Leader: Belle Brett, Alumnae Career Services, Radcliffe College)

   Place: Reception Room

4. Work Experiences at College (Leader: Barbara Burrell, University Policy Research Office, Harvard/Radcliffe)

   Place: Room C

5. Curriculum and Career Choice (Leader: Norma Ware, University Policy Research Office, Harvard/Radcliffe)

   Place: Card Room

6. Non-curricular Aspects and Career Choice (Leader: Susan Gostylo, Harvard/Radcliffe)

   Place: Map Room

3-4 p.m. Wrap-up Session (Living Room)

4-5 p.m. Reception (Lobby)

Career Development for Undergraduate Women Conference

Workshop Materials

Workshop Guidelines

As you know, one of the outcomes of this Conference and the research presented this morning will be a final report delivered to the Women's Educational Equity Act Program, as well as to high level administrators at institutions of higher learning across the country. Our primary goal is to provide specific suggestions (based on our findings and your reactions) to policy makers regarding how to broaden the career choices that undergraduate women make.

We hope you will participate in this endeavor by playing an active role in this workshop. We are interested in your thoughts and suggestions regarding the implications of our findings, both in terms of the educational institution you represent, and in terms of the position you hold within your institution. Each workshop will be introduced by a workshop leader; the leader's role, however, is really only as a facilitator of general discussion.

We have provided general topics on this sheet, which can serve as guidelines for all of the workshops. We have also included, on the accompanying sheets, questions which are relevant for each particular workshop. At the end of the workshop session, we will all meet again in the Living Room, for a wrap-up session. At that time, we would like one person from each workshop to give a brief (5-10 minutes) summary of the major issues and suggestions brought out in your workshop for the larger group. This will be followed by general discussion.

General Topics for Consideration

1. Are there changes which have occurred in the five years since the data were collected which might have implications for the relevance of our findings today?
2. What are the implications of the findings for future planning and policy makers at college institutions?
3. What are the important issues which should be addressed in the final report?
4. What actions, steps, discussions, networks, should be initiated now?

Workshop 1: The Roles of Faculty in Women Students' Thinking about Careers

Suggested Topics

- In what way do women faculty serve as role models for female undergraduates with regard to career choice?
- Is there a difference in the effects women faculty have as role models based on whether they are themselves in areas traditional or non-traditional for women?
- In what way do male faculty influence female undergraduates' career choices?
- Do women faculty who are in a minority at an institution differ in their effects on female undergraduates career choices from women faculty who are in departments where women are not in a minority?

Workshop 2: Administrative Decision-Making

Suggested Topics

- As women increase in numbers in administration, do they also increase in power?

- To what extent and how do women administrators serve as role models?

- What sorts of decisions should administrators be making that would be most effective in encouraging women undergraduates to consider a broader range of career options?

- What are the institutional features and policies which should most concern administrators in their consideration of the career development of their women undergraduates: admissions policies? hiring and tenure policies? introduction of special programs? type and effectiveness of counseling services?

Workshop 3: Career Counseling

Suggested Topics

- Do students make optional use of career counseling facilities? If not, why not?

- What kinds of career counseling services and programs are most effective for women undergraduates? Should there be special career counseling services for women students?

- Do career counseling services presently promote sex-role stereotyping in the suggestions they offer their clients?

Workshop 4: The Role of Work Experiences

Suggested Topics

- What is it about work experience that is so important in motivating students toward careers (i.e., obtaining particular skills? development of self-image as a worker? introduction to role models within the career area?)

- How can what is important about work experience be duplicated or supported by the college?

- How effective are "intern" programs in encouraging women undergraduates to consider a broader range of career options?

- Who are the students most influenced by intern experiences (i.e., those who already have a career interest or those who haven't yet thought about it?)

Workshop 5: Curriculum and Career Development

Suggested Topics

- Should the liberal arts curriculum foster career development for women? If so, how should this be done?

- Should core requirements reflect a concern for the career development of women students?

- Should career awareness be fostered in courses generally? In one particular course? As part of a major requirement? At the discretion of the faculty member?

Workshop 6: Non-curricular aspects of College Experience

Suggested Topics

- How do extracurricular activites (i.e., drama, debating, dorm activities, student-faculty committees, athletics) affect women students' career interests and choices?

- To what extent do extracurricular facilities reflect sex-role biases? (i.e., who manages the college radio stations? the newspapers? the sports teams?)

- To what extent should colleges provide extracurricular activities which facilitate women students' career development?

- How can women students be encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities which might increase their knowledge and interest regarding various careers?

Individual Reactions

This sheet is designed to assess your personal views about the policy implications of our findings. We know that sometimes the group discussions do not reflect individual feelings very adequately. Therefore, we would appreciate it if you would fill out this sheet before you leave today, or mail it to us as soon as possible.

Name: _____ Institution: _____

Mailing Address: _____

_____

_____

Position: _____ Workshop Attended: _____

Are you on the Murray Research Center Mailing List? _____yes _____no

Would you like to be? _____yes _____no

What do you think are the most important implications of this study for policy makers at institutions of higher learning?

What are some of the things you think the final report should emphasize?

What suggestions do you have for further research which needs to be done in this area?

Would you like to participate in or be informed of any further research projects growing out of this study (i.e., secondary analysis; follow-up; replication, etc.)?